AN ACT Relating to permitting students to wear traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events; adding a new section to chapter 28A.600 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature recognizes that relationships between sovereign governments are strengthened when decisions of mutual interest are based in a shared respect of cultural values. The legislature recognizes also that school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may use dress codes and other requirements to restrict the wearing of tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies.

Although the restrictions may be premised on promoting uniformity, they are not appropriate in the context of government-to-government relationships and do not recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of Native Americans.

The legislature, therefore, intends to affirm inherent rights assured through tribal sovereignty and expressly acknowledge that students in public schools and institutions of higher education may
wear traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 28A.600 RCW to read as follows:

(1) School districts and public schools may not prohibit students from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance as adornments at graduation ceremonies or related school events.

(2) School districts and, when necessary, public schools shall update any relevant policies or procedures in accordance with this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Adornment" means an item attached to or worn with, but not replacing, the cap and gown customarily worn at graduation ceremonies; and

(b) "Public schools" has the same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. Section 2 of this act applies to the graduating class of 2020 and subsequent graduating classes.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Institutions of higher education may not prohibit students from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance as adornments at graduation ceremonies or related events.

(2) Institutions of higher education shall update any relevant policies or procedures in accordance with this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Adornment" means an item attached to or worn with, but not replacing, the cap and gown customarily worn at graduation ceremonies; and

(b) "Institutions of higher education" has the same meaning as in RCW 28B.10.016.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. This act may be known and cited as the right to tribal regalia act.

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